

Respecting Your Privacy

Privacy issues that affect
your telephone service

State of Wisconsin

**When it comes to your phone service, we know you have many questions.
The State of Wisconsin's TeleWatch program will give you plain talk
about your telephone service.**

While advances in telephone technology offer added conveniences, they also introduce new privacy issues.

Caller Identification (Caller ID)

Caller ID is a service which reveals the number and/or the name of the person calling on a display of a small box that you purchase when you subscribe to the service.

If you wish to withhold your identity, you can "block" this feature by dialing *67 (or 1167 from a rotary telephone) each time before dialing the telephone number. The Caller ID subscriber will then see the letter "P", or the word, "private," or similar message, on the video display. However, when calling toll-free numbers, blocking may not prevent the display of your name. Phone companies are required to offer this per call blocking option free of charge.

Solicitations

Increased competition in the telephone industry has led to increased telephone and mail solicitations by phone companies. While effective competition could probably not exist without these solicitations, many people find them time-consuming and irritating.

To reduce unwanted solicitations for telephone service, you can write to the companies that are sending you the solicitations and tell them to stop.

You can also eliminate your name from large mailing lists which are sold to direct mail marketers. Your name will usually stay on the removal list for five years; then your name must be registered again. Write to:

Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 9008
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008

These efforts may not eliminate all your unwanted mail, but it should be significantly reduced.

In most cases, telemarketers must tell you that they are selling something, and who's doing the selling, before they make their pitch. Telemarketers are not allowed to:

- Call after 9 p.m. or before 8 a.m.
- Call you if you've asked not to be called.
- Misrepresent any information.
- Send a prerecorded telephone solicitation using an automatic dialer, without your consent.
- Send a solicitation by fax unless the company obtains your consent, or if you have an existing business relationship with the company and the fax is sent to you between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., and you have not notified the solicitor that the faxed solicitation is not wanted.

To reduce the number of telemarketing calls made to your phone, contact:

Telephone Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 9014
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014

This may not eliminate all your unwanted phone calls, but they should be significantly reduced.

Who can see my telephone records?

In most cases, your telephone records are confidential. However, they may be released if subpoenaed by an attorney who is involved in litigation or by a court order to law enforcement officers. You may not always be informed if or when such a release occurs.

Cellular and cordless phone calls

When you make a call using a cellular or cordless phone, your conversation may not be private. Since such calls use radio frequencies, they may be heard by others using the same frequency. Sometimes this can occur unintentionally simply by picking up another cordless or cellular phone. Others may use scanners to purposely listen in on your conversation.

Two methods are used to transmit wireless calls over the air: analog and digital. If you are concerned about whether your conversation will be overheard, digital signals are considered more secure because the sophistication and complexity of a digital system makes interception of calls virtually impossible.

Obscene and harassing calls

It is a criminal offense for anyone to make obscene or harassing phone calls. If you receive such a call:

- ◆ Hang up at the first obscene word or if silence lasts past the second "hello."
- ◆ Never give information such as your name or address.
- ◆ Advise your children to never give information to strangers. If you're not home, they should say "Mother/Father can't come to the phone right now," instead of "They're not home."

If such calls persist, contact the police for threatening calls. Then call your phone company. For non-threatening calls, your local phone company may be able to help.

Who can help?

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is the state agency that oversees the telephone industry. Most local and in-state telephone billing and service complaints may be directed to the PSC. Call or write to:

P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854
(800) 225-7729 (800-CAL-PSCW)
TTY (608) 267-1479
Fax (608) 266-3957
E-Mail: pscsecs@psc.state.wi.us
<http://psc.wi.gov>

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection mediates and investigates telecommunications complaints, including those regarding mail and phone solicitations, deceptive and misleading marketing, and long distance rate changes. Call or write to:

P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911
(800) 422-7128
TTY (608) 224-5058
Fax (608) 224-4939
E-Mail: datcph hotline@datcp.state.wi.us
<http://datcp.state.wi.us>

The Wisconsin Department of Justice enforces state law, including telecommunications. Write to them at:

123 West Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857
www.doj.state.wi.us

The Federal Communications Commission is the federal agency that oversees the telecommunications industry. Call or write to:

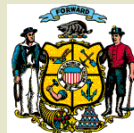
Consumer Protection Branch
Common Carrier Bureau
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554
Toll-free (888) 225-5322 (888-CALL FCC)
Toll-free TTY
(888) 835-5322 (888-TELL FCC)
www.fcc.gov

Bilingual service / Servicio Bilingüe

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is also able to provide customer assistance in Spanish. When calling the PSC, please ask to speak to a Spanish speaking representative.

En la Comisión de Servicios Públicos del estado de Wisconsin (PSC) podemos asistirles en español. Cuando llame a la PSC, pida hablar con un representante de habla hispana.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services, or employment. If you are speech hearing, or visually impaired and need assistance, call (608) 262-8524 or TTY (608) 267-1479. We will try to find another way to get the information to you in usable form.



This brochure was produced jointly by the WI Public Service Commission, the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the WI Department of Justice.